(b) and (c) Airlines from all countries were permitted to mount additional services under open sky policy for the period December, 2002 to 15th February, 2003 subject to commercial agreement with Air India. However, this limited pen sky policy was subsequently extended upto 30th June, 2003 for the airlines of Western Europe/USA only because of tourism potential and tourist demand from their airports.

Losses due to poor maintenance of aircrafts

1653. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Airlines has lost heavily on account of various discrepancies in aircraft fleet maintenance and revenue loss of about Rs. 200 crores due to grounding of A-300 and A-320 aircrafts;

(b) if so, what action has been taken by Government in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that despite having facilities for carrying out major checks on A-320 aircrafts in India, 12 such aircrafts were sent abroad for check up and if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what action Government propose to take to avoid such losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Indian Airlines has sent 15 A-320 aircraft for major checks abroad since the year 1998 to 2002 for the reasons that:—

(i) As against the capacity available for undertaking 17 to 18 'C checks per year the arisings were more than 20 'C checks.

(ii) It was not economical to start/create a second line of major maintenance to cater to the small number of excess arisings.

(iii) The deployment of aircraft are so planned that the maximum engine arisings are during the loan season. Since the capacity available for major maintenance is limited, Indian Airlines sends some of the aircrafts abroad to ensure that the full fleet is available for operations during the peak season.